

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: October 10, 2013

Agenda Item: Elk Management in Areas with Brucellosis 2014 Work Plan

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Approval of Final Rule

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 minutes

Background

In January 2013, the Commission endorsed elk management recommendations from a citizen working group for application in areas with brucellosis (Designated Surveillance Area as described by the Montana Department of Livestock). The Commission endorsed a 2013 work plan in February and reviewed annual implementation efforts at the Aug. 8 meeting. The 2013 work plan included hazing, fencing and dispersal hunts as management actions available for implementation. Examples of all three were applied in 2013. While recommendations from the citizen working group identified local working groups, that functionality has not been definitively identified in all areas despite FWP efforts to do so.

A proposed 2014 work plan was presented on Aug. 8. The 2014 plan was assembled by FWP with input from the statewide working group that met in Bozeman July 11 to review 2013 efforts. The meeting included a public comment period. The 2014 plan proposed in August offered several modifications based upon 2013 experiences and expanded upon the 2013 plan with renewed emphasis on local working groups and education/outreach. The 2014 plan has been proposed such that any work plans developed using local working group inputs may be proposed to the Commission at a future time as an addition or replacement to the 2014 plan proposed at the August meeting.

In response to public comments, the proposed 2014 work plan has been modified for final presentation to the Commission on Oct.10. Those modifications generally include greater detail and definition to specific implementation tools and process.

Public Involvement Process & Results

The public comment deadline was extended from Sept. 9 to Sept.13. Thirty comments were received with all going to the Commission. Individual examples of support and opposition are present with one consistent theme being the continued expectation for local working groups. FWP staff attended two watershed meetings and one sporting group meeting where this plan and process was described.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends adoption of the proposed 2014 annual work plan as modified by public comment. In addition to public comment, this adjusted plan reflects experience gained from 2013 efforts, inputs from the statewide working group and additional work necessary to fully address the original recommendations.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed or with adjustment per staff justifications, public comment and/or Commission discussion.

Proposed Motion

I move to adopt the proposed 2014 annual work plan for elk management in areas with brucellosis as modified and proposed by FWP.